

HAND OF FATE

THE HAND OF

# FATE

AUG.  
19c

GO BACK TO YOUR PIRATE  
GRAVE, YOU UNDEAD HORRORS!  
THIS IS MY TREASURE NOW...  
AAAYEEEE!!





**B**EHOLD—THE POLY OF THE MORTAL KNOWN AS OTTO MARLIN! HE WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR KNOWLEDGE . . . EVEN KILL HIS OWN KIND! BLINDLY, HE SEEMS TO UNRAVEL THE TANGLED WEB OF MYSTERY THAT IS CALLED LIFE, LITTLE REALIZING THAT SUCH MATTERS ARE BEYOND HIS KEN! AT, THERE ARE CERTAIN TRUTHS THAT MAN IS NOT MEANT TO KNOW, CERTAIN REALMS OF KNOWLEDGE THAT HE IS FORBIDDEN TO EXPLORE—AND IF HE DARES TO DEFTY HIS FATE, HIS DOOM IS SEALED!



# Lives of Otto Marlin

IN THE HOME-LABORATORY OF DR. OTTO MARLIN . . .

HERE YARE, DOC?  
ONE KIDNAPED GENE—  
JUST LIKE YOU ORDERED!

EXCELLENT! I'LL  
PAY YOU OFF LATER!  
MEET NOW, THE  
HEN TO THE CHAIR  
AND UNSEAL HER—  
THESE WALLS ARE  
SOUNDPROOF!



IF—IF YOU'VE HAD ME KIDNAPED FOR MONEY,  
I HAVE NONE! MY—MY NAME'S VIVIAN LAKE . . .  
I'M JUST A WORKING GIRL . . .!

MONEY DOESN'T INTEREST ME—ONLY  
KNOWLEDGE DOES! KNOWLEDGE OTHER  
DOCTORS FEAR, SO THEY THREW ME OUT OF  
THE MEDICAL PROFESSION. NOW I HAVE A  
NEW DRUG—TO BE TRIED FOR THE FIRST  
TIME . . . ON YOU!



THIS EXPERIMENT WILL PROVE WHETHER MY DRUG REVERSE THE FLOW OF NEURONIC IMPULSES IN THE BRAIN'S TEMPORAL LOBE--THAT PART IN WHICH ALL THE UNCONSCIOUS MEMORIES OF PAST REINCARNATIONS ARE STORED!

NO, MY RESEARCHS HAVE SHOWN THAT EVERY HUMAN BEING HAS HAD COUNTLESS PREVIOUS LIVES WHICH AREN'T REMEMBERED! I SHALL PROVE TO YOU ---

HOLD! IT IS FORTUNATE FOR ANY MORTAL TO REVERSE THE TIME FLOW AND LEARN THE SECRETS OF THEIR PAST LIVES!



YOU--YOU'RE MAD! REINCARNATION IS JUST A MYTH!

WHAT--WHO ARE YOU? HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?



IF YOU TAMPER WITH THIS INNOCENT GIRL'S LIFE, YOU WILL BE DOOMED BY HER... FOREVER! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

WHO WERE YOU TALKIN' TO, DOC? NO ONE'S THERE!



YOU--YOU DIDN'T SEE ANYONE... HEAR ANYTHING? THEN I--I MUST HAVE BEEN IMAGINING THINGS! I'D BETTER GET ON WITH THE EXPERIMENT...

NOW THEN, YOU WILL DESCRIBE YOUR SLIMPERS INTO YOUR PAST LIFE---BEFORE YOUR SPIRIT CROSSED OVER THE BOUNDARY INTO THAT LIFE!



AAARRR! NO! PLEASE... HOW HORRIBLE!

ORR... I--I'M BEING TORTURED... I SEEM TO BE IN THE PUBLIC STOCKY! A CROWD IS BOULTING... THE PEOPLE OF SALEM, MY FELLOW THOMPSONS ARE CLAMORING FOR MY BLOOD...!



YES, I SEE IT ALL CLEARLY NOW! I'M ACCUSED OF BEING A WITCH... THEY'RE TORTURING ME! I--I CAN'T KEEP FROM CONFESSING! ...!

STOP! THIS ODD MARLIN OVER THERE-- HE TURNED ME INTO A WITCH, AFTER I TOLD HIM YOUR TO HIM!



CONFESS, WITCH! TELL US WHICH AGENT OF THE DEVIL TAUGHT YE THE SECRETS OF WITCHCRAFT--AND YE SHALL GO FREE!

"INSTANTLY, THE CROWD SURGED  
TOWARD OTTO MARLIN...

"SEIZE HIM—HANG THE DEVIL'S  
AGENT!"



"HO TO ME, FAMILIARS  
AND INQUISITORS!"

"THE CROWD FALLS BACK  
FROM OTTO'S DEMONS,  
AND I KNOW HE WILL  
BREAK HIS VENGEANCE  
UPON ME BY FURROWING HIS  
HELLISH FROWNS, CLAMP  
ME TO DEATH..."



"FEAR HIM NOT, I HAVE A POINTED  
STAKE AT HIS HEART... AND HE WILL  
PERISH!"



"PARRRRGH!"

"THE GIRL WAS RIGHT! LOOK—  
THE DEMONS WAITING!"

"I...I...GAAA!"



"JUST THEN, OUTSIDE..."



"LOOK—THERE'S THE LICENSE  
PLATE OF THAT RIDGEUP CAR THAT  
WAS REPORTED AN HOUR AGO!"

"PEET, COO—A POLICE CAR'S  
PULLING UP OUTSIDE!"

"I'M SURE TO GET THE CHANCE FOR  
MURDERING THAT GIRL... BUT WITH  
THIS DRUG I CAN ESCAPE THE  
POLICE... AND THE PRESENT... I'LL  
GO BACK IN TIME... LUCKY I PRE-  
PARED SOME CAPSULES OF  
THE TEMPORAL DRUG."



"I'LL TAKE MORE OF THE DRUG  
THAN I HAVE THE GIRL... I'LL GO  
BACK EVEN FURTHER IN TIME—  
AND THEREBY ESCAPE THE DOOM  
OF THE 17TH CENTURY OTTO  
MARLIN. JUST IN CASE THAT WAS  
ONE OF MY REINCARNATIONS!"



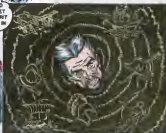
A MINUTE LATER...

THIS GUY'S DEAD, TOO---HE'S PROBABLY THE ONE WHO CALLED THE GIRL! I SUSPECT THAT CLOSED THE CASE!

NO, THE CASE OF OTTO MARLIN IS NOT YET OVER---FOR HIS SPIRIT STILL LIVES ON... IN THE PAST!



YES...DOWN, DOWN THROUGH THE SWIRLING FORCES OF TIME ITSELF PLUNGES THE TEMPORAL SPIRIT OF OTTO MARLIN...!



WHA...

WHA...WHAT HAPPENED? WAIT---I REMEMBER! I WAS OTTO MARLIN, OF 1933---MY THEORIES OF REINCARNATION WERE RIGHT! AND APPARENTLY MEMORIES AREN'T WIPE OUT WHEN ONE GOES BACK TO A PAST LIFE...!



A KNIGHT IN SIXTH-CENTURY ENGLISH ARMOR---SO I MUST BE BACK IN KING ARTHUR'S TIME! AND IF I'M MERLIN, THE GREATEST SORCERER OF THE AGE, THEN I KNOW ALL ABOUT MEDIEVAL WIZARDRY AS WELL AS TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCIENCE!

MERLIN---CAMELOT NEEDS  
THY HELP!



THE BLACK KNIGHT'S ARMY HAS ATTACKED THE TOWN---WHILE KING ARTHUR AND HIS MEN ARE OUT BATTLING THE BARBARIANS IN THE NORTH, CAMELOT WILL FALL UNLESS THY NIGHTY MAGIC HELPS US!

ELYN MOG BUOTH! RISE UP, DEFENDERS OF  
THE MYTHOWORLD---AND DESTROY THE  
ARMY OF THE BLACK KNIGHT!

AH, ALL OF MERLIN'S KNOWLEDGE  
IS FLOODING INTO MY MIND!

FEAR NOT? I WILL SUMMON  
DEMONS FROM THE BEYOND  
TO HELP US!



Floor...



AND LATER...



THE BLACK KNIGHT'S ARMY HAD BEEN DESTROYED—BUT I'LL LET MY "DRAGON" TEACH THE VILLAGERS TO FEAR MY POWER! HA HA! AND TO THINK PEOPLE IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY BELIEVE DRAGONS WERE ONLY MYTHICAL CREATURES OF A KING ARTHUR'S TIMES!

THE—THE APPARITION'S SONG! BUT TO BETTER PREPARE SOME MORE OF THE TEMPORAL DRUG... JUST IN CASE I HAVE TO LEAVE THIS INCARNATION IN A HURRY! LUCKILY, THE DRUG CAN BE MADE FROM HERBS WHICH ARE FOUND IN ALL AGES!



SO THOU ART MERLIN! EVER I—VIVIAN, LADY OF THE LAKE—HEARD OF THEE FROM AFRY! KING ARTHUR RESCUED ME FROM THE BARBARIANS... BUT I PRAY THAT NO ONE WILL RESCUE ME FROM THEE!

EVIL, MORTAL! YOU HAVE SEALED YOUR OWN FATE AND THE INSTRUMENT OF YOUR DESTRUCTION WILL BE THE REINCARNATION OF THE GIRL YOU SLEW IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY! YOUR SONG! AWAITS YOU—THROUGH ALL YOUR DOOMED LIVES!

WHA...? THE APPARITION AGAIN?



AFTERWARDS, UPON THE RETURN OF KING ARTHUR TO CAMLOT...

HAIL, KNIGHT IN LANCE! HAVE HEARD OF THY FEAT IN DE-STROYING THE ARMY OF THE BLACK KNIGHT! TRULY THOU ART THE POWER BEHIND MY THRONE!

THAT—THAT GIRL! SHE HAD THE FACE OF VIVIAN LAKE—THE GIRL I KILLED IN 1913!



ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT LEGENDS, MERLIN WAS DESTROYED BY THE LADY OF THE LAKE BECAUSE HE DIDN'T RETURN HER LOVE! I MUST GET RID OF HER... BEFORE THE LEGENDS COME TRUE!



SO IT WAS THAT MERLIN, ALIAS OTTO MARLIN, PREPARED HIS TEMPORAL DRUG AND LAY IN WAIT FOR ONE OF THE SERVANTS OF VIVIAN, LADY OF THE LAKE.



STOP GUARING, FOOL! SLIP THIS POWDERED LOVE POTION INTO THY MISTRESS'S DRINK TONIGHT WHEN I CALL ON HER—AND I WILL GIVE THEE GREAT RICHES!

REFUSE—AND MY DRAGON DEVOUR THEE!

I—I WILL OBEY THEE, O MIGHTY MAGICIAN!

BUT THE SERVANT'S LOYALTY TO HIS MISTRESS WAS GREATER THAN HIS FEAR OF DEATH.

AND HE SAID HE WOULD CALL UPON THEE TONIGHT!

I NEED NO LOVE POTION FROM MERLIN—I ALREADY LOVE HER! I PLACE THE POTION IN HER DRINK TONIGHT!



SO, DART HEW!

GLARY DEEPLY, MY LOVELY ONE!

HA HA! THAT DRINK WILL SEND HER BACK 8,000 YEARS IN TIME... AND I'LL HAVE FULFILLED THAT APPARITION'S PROPHECY OF MY DOOM!



DOWN, DOWN THROUGH THE SWIRLPOOL OF THE AGES AGAIN, WHERE THE CENTURIES TICK AWAY LIKE SILENT, SILENT, SILENT.



WHA...

WHA... WHERE...? OH—THIS IS ANOTHER OF MY INCARNATIONS—THAT WITCH VIVIAN MUST HAVE SWITCHED GLASSES WITH ME! NOW I'M A NEGROMANCER IN ANCIENT EGYPT! ONCE AGAIN I HAVE ESCAPED DEATH...



RISE UP, O BAST, GODDESS OF LIFE... AND THOU, GOD OF THE DEAD—TO ACCEPT THIS HUMAN SACRIFICE!



HEAR ME, OT MARLOTEP, MIGHTY HEBDOMANCHER!  
I, PHARAOH OF ALL EGYPT, HEREBY BESTOW UPON  
YOU HALF THE GOLD IN MY TREASURE HOUSES—  
FOR SAMMUCHING UP THE SACRED GOOSE! AND MY  
WIFE, THE QUEEN, JOINS ME IN HOMAGE TO YOU!

WHA—THE QUEEN? CAN  
I NEVER ESCAPE  
THAT FACE?



JEALOUS OF THE HEBDOMANCHER'S GROWING POWER,  
THE QUEEN STEALTHILY FOLLOWED HIM INTO THE  
TOMB OF THE DEAD, HOPING TO LEARN HIS SECRETS.

I MUST KEEP CLOSE WATCH ON THIS HEBDO-MANCHER—  
AND DESTROY HIM BEFORE THE PHARAOH STARTS  
GIVING HIM ALL MY WEALTH!

I MUST NOT LET HER BE THE INSTRUMENT  
OF MY DOOM IN THIS INCARNATION!  
I'LL DESTROY HER BY GIVING HER ENOUGH  
OF THE TEMPORAL DRUG TO SEND HER  
BACK INTO THE DAWN OF HISTORY!



BY THIS—THOSE ARE THE DEADLIEST POISONS  
KNOWN! I WILL HAVE MY BERYNENTS SCOUR THE  
EARTH TO GATHER THOSE DRUGS—AND AT THE  
FEAST OF ANJUS, OT MARLOTEP WILL DIE!

OBEY ME, O SPIRITS OF THE DEAD! BRING  
UNTIL ME THE POWDERED ROOTS OF THE MANDRAGE—  
THE SAP OF THE HENLOKE—THE JUICE OF  
THE DEADLY NIGHTSHADE



SO IT WAS THAT, UNKNOWN TO EACH OTHER, THE HEBDO-  
MANCHER AND THE QUEEN DRUMBLED EACH OTHER'S DRINKS  
AT THE FEAST OF ANJUS. AND BOTH WERE INSTANTLY  
SWEPT BACK, BACK INTO THE MISTS OF THE AERONS.  
BACK TO THE TIME WHEN THE EARTH WAS YOUNG AND  
MAMMALS DID NOT YET EXIST.



BACK TO THE AGE OF DI-  
SECTS, TO THE VERY FIRST  
INCARNATIONS OF OTTO MARLIN  
AND VIVIAN LACE. AS SPIDERS  
AND WHEN THE FEMALE SPIDER  
DEVOURED THE MALE AFTER THE  
NATURE OF ITS KIND, OTTO MARLIN FINALLY  
REACHED AN INCARNATION FROM WHICH HE  
COULD NOT ESCAPE—HE HAD REACHED  
THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF HIS EXIS-  
TENCE, AS IT WAS WRITTEN IN THE  
BOOK OF FATE!



# A Hand of FATE Mystery

PP. 23

FROM THE SHADY INTERIOR OF THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES, COMES A FANTASY AND ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE STORY. HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO, AS TODAY, CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THIS WET SWAMPLAND WAS UNEXPLORED BECAUSE OF THE BARBARIAN LIVING THERE. BUT IN 1928, TWO ADVENTUROUS HUNTERS PREPARED TO ENTER THIS MYSTERIOUS SWAMP AND TRAVEL ITS FORBIDDEN AREAS.



BEFORE YOU ENTER THIS SECTION, I MUST WARN YOU OF THE LEGEND OF THE SWAMP! MANY, MANY YEARS AGO, A SMALL TRIBE OF BENIGLE INDIANS MADE THIS LAND PARADISE TO ALL STRANGERS. THIS IS THEIR SACRED BURIAL GROUND. ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE TRIBE ARE LONG DEAD, BUT IT IS SAID THE SPIRIT OF THEIR CHIEF STILL WATCHES OVER IT!



FRED—I-I HAVE A QUEER FEELING WE'RE BEING WATCHED! PERHAPS—

FORGODSSE, BART! DON'T TELL ME YOU BELIEVE THAT FANTASTIC FABLE!



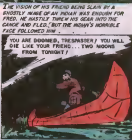
SOON THEY CAMPED FOR THE NIGHT. BUT SUDDENLY THE SWAMP SHOOK WITH AN ABOOMING SCREAM.

BART! — WHA... HE'S BEING SCALPED! BUT HOW.



THE PAIN-STROKEN MAN MADE HIS WAY BACK TO CIVILIZATION IN HIS NEW YORK APARTMENT. THE NIGHT OF THE INDIAN GHOST STILL HUNTED HIM. TWO MONTHS HAD COME TO AN END AND THIS NIGHT WAS THE NIGHT THE EVIL VOICE HAD BOOMED HIM!

T-THE INDIAN—AAAAGH!




YOU ARE DOOMED, TRESPASSER! YOU WILL DIE LIKE YOUR FRIEND... TWO MOONS FROM TONIGHT!



I CAME AS I PROMISED, TRESPASSER!

FRED'S SCREAM BROUGHT WITNESSES TO THE GORY SCENE. HE LAY DEAD ON THE FLOOR WITH A TOMAHAWK BURIED DEEP IN HIS SKULL, AND THERE WAS NO WAY FOR ANY LIVING BEING TO HAVE ENTERED THE ROOM TO COMMIT THE SHASTLY CRIME! THE TOMAHAWK WAS INSPECTED BY AUTHORITIES AND PROVED TO BE ONE USED BY AN EXTINCT TRIBE OF SEMINOLE'S LONG DEAD! THE DEVILISH HAND OF FATE HAD REACHED THROUGH TIME AND SPACE TO FULFILL ITS DREADED DESTINY!



SOME MEN WILL KILL FOR LOVE, OTHERS FOR FAME... BUT PROFESSOR HARLOW GRIFFITH KILLED FOR BOTH ON THAT FATEFUL DAY AT THE EXPEDITION SITE ON MT. PHOENIX, GREECE.

THE ANCIENT INSCRIPTION IN THIS CAVE WARNS AGAINST TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT'S BEHIND THE WALL? IT MAY BE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND OF THE AGE, PROFESSOR GRIFFITH? SO I'LL PLACE THE DYNAMITE RIGHT AT THE BASE OF THE WALL?

I MUST TAKE THIS CHANCE! THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO GET RID OF HIM!

AND IF THIS DISCOVERY BRINGS ME FAME, I'M GOING TO MARRY A CERTAIN GIRL ON OUR EXPEDITION STAFF... DR. NANCY BLAKE!

DO YOU THINK I FAME AND THE GIRL WILL BE MINE? DIE, RODER TOWNLEY... DIE!

# STAMPED

of the

## CENTAURS

LO! AFTER COUNTLESS AGES... WE ARE FREE!

BOOM!



BUT THE WAYS OF DESTINY ARE STRANGE... AND A MURDERER'S ETERNAL DAMNATION CAN TAKE MORE FORMS THAN THE MIND OF MAN CAN CONCEIVE! FOR THE EXPLOSION THAT BLEW A MAN'S BODY TO ATOMS ALSO RUPTURED AWAY THE PROTECTIVE WALL OF THE CENTAURS, AND UNLEASHED A MONSTROUS TERROR FROM THE ANCIENT PAST...





BY THE POWER OF MY SPELL, RETURNED TO THE  
FORTUNES OF FALGOS, HAROLD BRISTON SAVED  
HIS DAIED HEAD... AND ESCAPED AHEAD OF  
THE FIRST JUDGMENT, FIRST OF HIS PEACE!

MY-MY BODY...  
IT'S THAT OF A  
HORSE! I—I'VE  
TURNED INTO A CENTAUR!

OF COURSE! THAT WAS  
THE ONLY WAY WE COULD  
BRING YOU ETERNAL  
LIFE!



FOOLS! THIS ISN'T THE WAY I WANTED  
IT! I WANT TO HAVE IMMORTALITY AND  
STILL BE A MAN!



YES! YOU WERE NOT BORN  
A CENTAUR, SO YOU CAN  
RETURN TO YOUR HUMAN  
FORM AT ANY TIME MERELY  
BY WISHING TO DO SO! AND  
LIKEWISE, YOU CAN ALWAYS  
CHANGE FROM YOUR HUMAN TO  
CENTAUR FORM AT WILL!



AND NOW YOU CAN JOIN US  
AS WE SCATTER TO THE FOUR  
CORNERS OF THE EARTH... TO  
WREAK SUCH EVIL AS PRESENT-  
DAY MORTALS NEVER  
DREAMED OF!

IF THEY SCATTER,  
THEY'LL NEVER BRING  
ME THE FAME I'LL  
NEED TO WIN  
BANDY BLAZES!

NO! BAST!



HIDE HERE IN  
YOUR CAME UNTIL  
TODAY... WHEN  
I'LL SHOW YOU  
HOW WE CAN  
COMMIT GREATER  
CRIMES THAN  
YOU EVER  
DREAMED OF!

WE SWORE TO OBEY  
THE ONE WHO FREED  
US, SO WE WILL DO  
WHATEVER YOU SAY...  
BUT ONLY UNTIL TO-  
MORROW! AFTER THAT,  
WE MUST HAVE THE  
FREEDOM WE HAVE  
WAITED FOR  
SO LONG!



WHEN THE CENTAURS  
RETURNED TO THEIR  
FIRST CARE...

I'LL PLACE ANOTHER  
BATCH OF DYNAMITE HERE, SO  
I CAN RECALL THEM IN THE  
CASE IF THEY TRY TO DEFEY ME!  
I'LL NEVER LET THE GREATEST  
DISCOVERY OF ALL TIME  
ESCAPE ME!



THOSE CENTAURS WILL BRING  
ME WEALTH AS WELL AS FAME!  
TURNING THEM INTO CAGES AND  
PUTTING THEM ON EXHIBITION  
WILL MEAN BIGGIES FOR ME...  
AND HONOR! SHE WON'T SPURN  
MY LOVE WHEN SHE LEARNS  
I'LL BE THE RICHEST AND  
MOST FAMOUS ARCHAEOLOGIST  
OF ALL TIME!



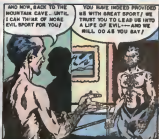


OUR-OUR BULLETS DO NOT STOP THOSE MONSTERS!

FOOLS... HOW CAN YOU KILL THE IMMORTAL ONES?



HA! WOMEN THROUGH THE AGES WOULD HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO POSSESS THE THRA OF HELEN OF TROY! SURELY THE WOMAN I LOVE WILL AT LEAST GIVE ME HER HAND IN MARRIAGE FOR IT!



AND NOW, BACK TO THE MOUNTAIN CAVE... UNTIL I CAN THINK OF SOME EVIL SPORT FOR YOU!

YOU HAVE INDEED PROVIDED ME WITH GREAT SPORT! WE TRUST YOU TO LEAD US INTO A LIFE OF EVIL--AND WE WILL DO AS YOU SAY!



LATER, IN DR. MARY ALAKE'S TEXT ON THE SLOPES OF MT. PINCH...

AM, I'VE FINISHED THE TRANSLATION!... IF THESE ASHES OF THE HYDRA BE SPILLED BY THE FEET OF ITS ETERNAL ENEMY, THE HYDRA WILL RETURN TO LIFE TO HAVE ETERNAL WAR!



THAT INSCRIPTION IS RIDICULOUS... THE HYDRA WAS JUST A MYTHICAL MINE-HEADED MONSTER! BUT I THINK I'LL TAKE A SAMPLE OF THESE ASHES AND HAVE THE EXPEDITION CHIEF ANALYZE THEM!



STRANGE... I THOUGHT I HEARD HOOF-BEATS OUTSIDE! OH... IT'S ONLY YOU AGAIN!

YES! I'VE COME TO PROVE I DO KNOW ABOUT THE ROMANTIC THINGS A WOMAN REALLY WANTS! I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU THAT CLEOPATRA WOULD HAVE SOLD HER KINGDOM FOR!







A MOMENT LATER,  
OUT OF THE ASHES  
OF THE DEAD PAST...

AHHH! THE HYDRA...  
OUR ETERNAL  
ENEMY OF YORE!

THE—THE PROPHECY  
WRITTEN ON THE URN  
WAS FULFILLED!



AS THE NINE HEADS OF THE ANCIENT MON-  
STER BURST OUT IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

NOW'S MY CHANCE TO  
GET OUT OF THIS  
HELLISH PLACE!

THE PAIN!  
THE PAIN!



BUT IT WAS DR. HANCOCK'S SENSE OF  
DUTY TO TRIP ON A LOOSE ROCK AS SHE  
RAN OUT OF THE INNER CAVE...  
JUST AS IT WAS PROFESSOR  
BRIDGEMAN'S FATE THAT HIS INTERESTED  
FOOTER SHOULD FALL IN THE DETONATOR HE HAD  
PLACED A SAFE DISTANCE FROM THE HIDDEN  
DYNAMITE!



MY-MY DYNAMITE  
WENT OFF! WE'RE  
SEALD IN HERE  
FOREVER!

THE—THE GIFT OF ETERNAL  
LIFE IS NOW A CURSE! WE  
CANNOT DIE... BUT MUST  
SUFFER THE HYDRA'S TOR-  
TURES THROUGH ALL  
ETERNITY!



EEEEYAAAAHHH! THE PAIN! THE PAIN! OH, WHY  
CAN'T I DIE? I DON'T WANT IMMORTALITY NOW!  
IF ONLY DEATH COULD BE MY FATE---DEATH!

YES, THE WAYS OF FATE ARE STRANGE AND  
RELENTLESS... AS HARLOW BRIDGEMAN WILL  
KNOW TILL THE END OF TIME!

# A Hand of FATE Mystery

# 24

THE TALE OF "THE CAVE OF THE VAMPIRE BAT" HAD BEEN A TOPIC OF RAFT DISCUSSION FOR YEARS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO. IN 1933, A TWO OF AMERICANS FROM HOLLYWOOD CAME TO SCOUT A LOCATION IN A DESERTED REGION OF MEXICO. THEY WERE PLANNING A HORROR MOVIE AND HAD CHOSEN ON THIS PARTICULAR AREA BECAUSE OF THE MANY WERD TILES THEY HAD HEARD ABOUT IT.



THERE IT IS, SENTLY—"THE CAVE OF THE VAMPIRE BAT"!

S—I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF IT!

I'VE STARRED IN MANY HORROR FILMS, BUT THIS WILL BE THE MOST BRUESOME!



THE THREE MEN EXPLORED THE INTERIOR OF THE CAVE.

WE CAN SET A CAMERA HERE FOR SOME WERD EFFECTS.

I'M GOING TO EXPLORE THIS TUNNEL!

THE ACTOR WALKED INTO THE HURRY TUNNEL AND DISAPPEARED SOON THE OMINOUS SILENCE OF THE BLACK CAVE WAS BROKEN BY A MAD SCREAMING AND EMOTIO BEATING OF HEARTS.



IT'S SENTLY—HE'S IN TROUBLE!

S—BATS—THEY'RE COMING FOR US!

AAAAIIIIYY



THE AIR WAS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH NOISE, FLAPPING WINGS AND GLOWING EYE EYES. THE TWO MEN PAINTED FROM FRIGHT.

AN HOUR LATER THEY CAME TO THEIR SENSES. THE CAVE WAS EMPTY—SILENT SINCE AGAIN. THEIR THOUGHTS TURNED TO THEIR MISSING COMRADE, SENTLY. THEY FOLLOWED SENTLY'S ROUTE INTO THE TUNNEL AND CAME UPON A SCENE OF HORROR.



GREAT HEAVENS—SENTLY!

S—HE'S TURNED INTO A VAMPIRE BAT!

THE TWO MEN FLED TO THE VILLAGE TO REPORT THE AWESOME AFFAIR TO THE AUTHORITIES. THEY WERE MET WITH SHOWING BLANCES BY THE TOWNSPEOPLE. THE PEOPLE ALREADY KNEW OF THE EVILS THAT SURROUNDED THE CAVE OF THE VAMPIRE BAT, BUT THE TWO AMERICANS MADE CERTAIN THAT THE TERRIBLE FATE THEIR FRIEND HAD MET WOULD NOT OCCUR AGAIN. THEY RETURNED TO THE CAVE WITH DYNAMITE AND SEALED IT FURTHER AGAINST THE TERROR OF THE VAMPIRE BAT!

# SATAN'S SINISTER BARGAIN



IT STARTED SIMPLY ENOUGH FOR TONY PASCAL. STEALING, CHEATING, PETTY ROBBERY, MESSING FOR PALTRY FRANCES—THEN CAME THE FORTY-NIGHT WHEN DESPERATION DROVE HIM TO MURDER! BUT AS HE WIPE THE BLOOD OFF HIS HANDS, HE FOUND HIMSELF FACE TO FACE WITH A HORROR HE COULDN'T DENY.



GENUINER'S / IT'S THE GUILLOTINE IF THEY CATCH ME!

HALT / STAY WHERE YOU ARE!

*BUT TONY FLED THROUGH THE DAMNED STREETS  
AS IF THE DEVIL HIMSELF WERE AFTER HIM...*



TONY SPRANG FROM THE SHIRT / THE OLD MAN'S BLOOD STAINED HIS HANDS



BLOODY THE OLD MAN'S / TO BE SEEN NOW WITH BLOOD ON MY HANDS WOULD MEAN THE END / I MUST...

AND THE CLOTH DOES THE TRICK / IN FACT, THE OLD MIRROR WITH THE STRANGE FRAME SHOULD BRING ME MANY FRANCES /



STRANGE / IN THE REFLECTION DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ME / THERE'S SOMETHING HORRIBLE ABOUT THE FACE IN THE MIRROR /



HORRIBLE, EN? COME WITH ME, FILLER OF OLD MEN, AND I WILL REALLY SHOW YOU DEMONS FROM HELL /

LET GO / LET GO OF ME /



NO, MON AM, YOU ARE MY SLAVE NOW, FOR YOU LOOKED INTO THE DEVIL'S MIRROR /



THERE IS NO ESCAPE, TONY FASCAL— THOUGH I MUST ADMIT IT WAS YOU WHO FREED ME WHEN YOU REMOVED THE CLOTH FROM THE MIRROR / COME, FOLLOW THE PATH OF NO RETURN /

THIS MUST BE SOME HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE / I'LL WAKE UP AND FIND IT WAS ONLY A DREAM /



BUT IT WAS NO DREAM, AND AS TONY SLOWLY REALIZED THIS, FEAR CLUTCHED HIS HEART!



IT—IT'S TRUE!  
THIS IS REALLY  
HAPPENING!

BY THE DEMONS OF  
DARKNESS, IT ASSUR-  
EDLY IS! LOOK INTO  
THE CHAMBERS  
WHERE MY MIMICS  
WORK AND PLEAD!



MASTER! MASTER!  
HELP US—FREE US  
FROM THIS LIVING  
HELL!

GO BACK TO YOUR PIT—  
YOU ARE DOOMED TO  
ETERNITY!



HERE IS ANOTHER ONE—  
TONY PASCAL! THIS  
ONE IS ESPECIALLY  
RESERVED FOR  
MURDERERS!



AND THIS, MY FRIEND, IS  
WHERE THE UNFORTUNATE  
VICTIMS OF THE SULLIVAN  
WORK FOR ME! BUT COMING  
BACK TO YOU—WHICH  
CHAMBER WOULD YOU LIKE!

I'VE GOT TO THINK  
FAST—THERE MUST  
BE SOME ESCAPE!



WHAT! A PRISON DESERVES  
A FAVOR IN RETURN? DID YOU  
NOT SAY THAT WHEN I RE-  
MOVED THE CLOTH FROM  
THAT IMPRISON, I FREED  
YOU?

NO! YOU ARE  
A CRAFTY ONE,  
TONY PASCAL!



BUT FAIR IS FAIR! FOR RELEASING ME I WILL  
LET YOU RETURN TO THE LIVING—ON ONE  
CONDITION! YOU MUST TAKE THE IMPRISON WITH  
YOU—AND ONCE EACH MONTH, ONE WITH EVIL  
IN HIS HEART MUST LOOK INTO IT! FOR THE  
SLAVES YOU SEND ME, I WILL GIVE YOU FAME  
AND FORTUNE. BUT YOU YOURSELF MUST  
NEVER LOOK IN THE IMPRISON!

AGREED—  
GLADLY!

THEN THE PLANES  
SPORTED HIGHLY, AND  
BEHOLD, THE HORROR  
IMAGES FLEW FROM TONY  
PASCAL'S MIND HE FOUND  
HIMSELF DRIFTING AN-  
GLESSLY THROUGH SPACE...





THE PROMISE WAS NOT  
FORGOTTEN: ONCE  
EACH MONTH TONY  
DELIVERED A VICTIM,  
AND AS THE  
YEARS PASSED HE  
FOUND FAME AND  
WEALTH: NOW  
THE NAME WAS  
WONDERFUL: ANTOINE  
PASCAL, PATRON  
OF THE ARTS!



HIS CHATEAU WAS KNOWN ALL OVER TOWN, AND THE VILLAGERS BOWED AS  
HE ROSE PAST, BUT TONY PASCAL WAS FRIGHTENED, FOR AS THE MONTHS  
PASSED HE WAS RUNNING OUT OF "FRIENDS"!



AND SOON, IN HIS PRIVATE STUDY...



MONTHS PASSED: THE FORMER PETTY THIEF WHO  
HAD CLEVERLY ELUDGED HIS FATE, BECAME MORE  
AND MORE LONELY IN HIS LARGE CHATEAU. FINALLY  
HE DECIDED THAT WHAT HE NEEDED WAS COMPANION-  
SHIP--THE COMPANIONSHIP OF MARRIAGE. BUT HE  
MUST TAKE CARE--FOR THE WOMAN HE WANTED  
MUST HAVE NO EVIL IN HER HEART!



AFTER LOOKING FAR AND WIDE, AT LAST HE FOUND A GIRL THAT SUITED HIS WISHES...

GO HURRY,

AN REYON, ANNABELLE DO NOT FRET IN LEISURE THAN A WEEK I SHALL RETURN TO YOU!

DEAREST, I'LL MISS YOU SO MUCH! WHEN YOU RETURN I'LL HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU!



ONLY IT WAS A SURPRISE THAT HIS YOUNG BRIDE WAS PLANNING — A SURPRISE INDEED!

THERE! THAT OLD MIRROR ANTHONY HAD IN HIS STUDY LOOKS SO MUCH BETTER OUT HERE, PARTICULARLY WITH THIS NEW FRAME!



A FEW DAYS LATER, TONY PASCAL RETURNED HOME UNEXPECTEDLY AS HE STOOD IN THE Foyer...

WHAT'S THIS, A NEW MIRROR, EUP I'LL SPRUCE UP A BIT BEFORE I CALL ANNABELLE!



WELL? THERE'S SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT THE SHAPE OF THIS MIRROR-- SOMETHING EVIL! NO! NO! THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!



NOR, THERE IS NO MISTAKE, MON AND— YOU ARE LOOKING INTO THE DEVIL'S MIRROR!

AND THIS TIME I PERSONALLY COME FOR YOU! TOO BAD, BUT I WARNED YOU NEVER TO LOOK INTO THE MIRROR!



BUT SOMEONE MOVED IT— I ALWAYS KEPT IT IN THE LIBRARY! ANNABELLE— ANNABELLE!

ANNABELLE, I'M RIGHT HERE — LISTEN TO ME!

SHE CAN NEITHER SEE NOR HEAR YOU, TONY PASCAL! AND IT WILL NOT HARM HER TO LOOK IN THE MIRROR, AS THERE IS NO EVIL IN HER HEART! COME!



THIS WAY... AND THIS TIME IT IS THE PATH OF NO RETURN! THIS TIME YOU MUST CHOOSE YOUR CHAMBER WHERE YOU WILL DWELL FOR ETERNITY!



THE END

# SPECTRE IN THE ARENA

Willy Martin was running, running. He ran fearfully, passing every once in a while to look back at the awful thing chasing him. Then he would mean and race on through one narrow, deserted street after another. His breath came in gasps so that he thought his lungs would burst, but still he didn't dare stop.

Dimly he heard the tumult and cheers still issuing from the fight arena he'd left, but gradually the sounds grew fainter, and there was just the clatter of his steps on the pavement—and coming closer all the time was the muffled, soft patter of something after him. Not a man, not a human really, but some ghastly aftergrowth thing; some hideous, unstoppable apparition that looked like Mike Kelly who had died a year ago tonight in the ring.

Willy Martin longed to stop, but he had to go on. Finally his feet gave out under him and he staggered, then tripped, and as he fell, he turned his face upward and looked fully on the bloodless countenance of Mike Kelly, standing there in his tattered boxing trunks, pieces of the foul earth from which he'd wrested himself still clinging to him, and the awful stretch of the undead came up and surrounded Willy Martin as the first blow began to fall and he screamed in agony....

It had all begun just a week ago, this awful premonition that Mike Kelly had returned from the grave to avenge himself. And at first Willy Martin didn't believe it, and then he wouldn't let it stop him.

Just a week ago fight manager Willy had returned to his office, propped his feet up on his desk, and dozed. Today he'd signed the dead Mike Kelly's protégé, Pete Rodriguez, to fight in the Arena in a championship bout.

Rodriguez would be slaughtered in the ring, but Willy didn't care. He stood to make a lot of money on the deal. There hadn't been as sweet a setup since he'd sent Mike Kelly into the ring with a bad heart, knowing he couldn't win. He'd made a lot of money on that bout, too.

Willy didn't know what made him think of Mike at that moment, unless it was the fact that Rodriguez and Kelly had been close buddies. Rodriguez had come to Willy with starburst in his eyes shortly after Mike's death.

"Please, Mr. Martin," Rodriguez had pleaded. "Tell me if I've got a chance. I want to win the championship for Mike. He wanted to be champion, but he died. Now, if I can do it, I want to be champion for Mike."

Willy's eyes had slid thoughtfully over Rodriguez.

The kid wasn't top-notch, he knew, but that didn't matter. He'd look good for a few rounds. Willy shrugged.

"You can do it, Pete," he said. "You can do it easy."

Rodriguez started training that day, and it was that night that Willy had his first bad dream. It seemed to him that he was walking past Mike Kelly's grave, and somehow Mike had gotten out of it. He grabbed Willy's jacket as he passed, holding him fast.

"Don't doublecross the kid," Mike warned. "Nothing will stop me, not even the grave—don't doublecross Pete!"

The dream had been so real that Willy had awakened in a cold sweat. He lit a cigarette with a shaking hand and turned up the light. He was relieved to hear the first stirrings of morning outside his window.

But once he'd showered and shaved, he'd dismissed the dream and continued training Rodriguez.

Nothing more had happened, not till the week before the fight when he sat in his office feeling good because the contract was signed. Then he'd thought of Mike Kelly and that dream, and slowly his eyes had been drawn to the large, plate-glass framed picture of Kelly that hung on the opposite wall in the long row of fighters Willy had handled.

As Willy stared at the picture, the room seemed to be filled suddenly with a whispering. "I'll come back from the grave if you doublecross the kid," Mike warned again. "Remember, Willy..."

The rasping voice swirled around the room, and as Willy sat frozen, it seemed to him that Mike Kelly's golden boxing gloves, tucked beneath the frame picture by their knotted strings, stirred slightly. Then all was still again.

Abruptly Willy pressed the buzzer underneath his desk that summoned Chuck Maloney in a shuffling walk into his office.

"Did you hear someone talking in here?" Willy demanded of his trainer.

Maloney scratched his head thoughtfully. "Didn't hear a sound," he said. "I was just outside, too. Why?"

Willy hesitated a moment, and then burst forth. "I could have sworn Mike Kelly was in here talking, warning me not to let Rodriguez fight. It was his voice. I know it!"

But then, as Chuck Maloney looked at him suspiciously, Willy said abruptly, "Never mind. Forget it. I must have been dreaming."

Once Maloney left the office, Willy strode over

to the small mirror that hung at one end of the room. He looked carefully at his reflection.

"Don't go getting soft," he told his reflection. "Don't go developing a conscience. Mike Kelly's dead!"

He was about to turn away from the mirror, when he was suddenly conscious of someone, somewhere standing beside him, peering into the glass over his shoulder, grinning at him!

It started first as a vapor, a vague cloud, and gradually as he stared, it shaped itself into the hideous, decayed, but recognizable features of Mike Kelly!

With a cry, Willy tore his gaze away from the mirror and left the office. But once outside he managed to still the furious pounding of his heart, and when he thought of the money he'd make on Rodriguez' fight, he determined that no ghost would stop his plans. It was just a week till the fight. He'd stand it till then, and afterward he'd go away, maybe to Florida, where he'd relax and forget the nightmares he was having.

It wasn't until light night at the Arena that Willy looked at the contract Rodriguez had signed. He was in the dressing room when it fell out of his jacket pocket. And as he went to pick it up, he noticed the signatures of the two fighters. The Champ's signature was prominent, but on the line where he'd watched Rodriguez laboriously pen his name there now stood the signature of Mike Kelly!

Willy shouldered his way with Rodriguez to the ring. Here among the crowd, he started to feel better, safer, and he mopped his forehead. He was anxious for the fight to be over, to be able to put this whole ghastly business out of his mind.

He watched as Rocco, the champ, came down the aisle and clambered over the ropes amid the cheers of the mob. Rocco was cool and confident. When the bell rang, he came out from his corner like a tiger.

By the time the first round was over, it was apparent that Rodriguez didn't have a chance. He was taking an awful beating, and at the end of the round, as he went to his corner, he turned an agonized, bewildered gaze on Willy.

Willy sat there, chewing his cigar, not meeting the kid's eyes. The sooner the fight was over, he thought, the better. All he wanted now was to collect his share of the gate money and go away. Rodriguez could go back on the dump heap then.

The second round began, and it was a slaughter. Rodriguez refused to be down, still not aware what was happening to him. Finally his chin connected with Rocco's left, and he went down and out like a light. He was down for almost the entire count, when it happened.

Suddenly, as though he were standing behind Willy, Mike Kelly's voice said clearly, "I've come

back from the grave, Willy. I told you I would."

Like a man mesmerized, Willy stared at the ring. Rodriguez had gotten up while the crowd roared their surprise. But what they couldn't see, Willy knew, was the other figure in the ring, the decayed, decomposed, beyond-the-grave creature, his gilded boxing gloves glinting in the spotlight.

Mike Kelly walked alongside Rodriguez, directing the kid's blows, making each one count, giving a supernatural strength to the kid. And a shocked roar developed among the fight fans as murmurs grew, "Rodriguez is fighting like Mike Kelly! It's as though he were Mike Kelly!"

The fight ended in the third round, and as the referee raised the surprised kid's triumphant hand, the figure that stood in the center of the ring turned his malevolent gaze on Willy Martin.

With a strangled cry, Willy tore himself from the ring. He pushed out into the aisle, seeking to lose himself, but when he looked back, he saw Mike Kelly stalking after him.

No too in the arena was aware of what was happening as Willy pushed his way through the crowd. But when he came outside, Mike Kelly stood just a short distance away, his gloves uplifted in a menacing boxing gesture.

"Now, Willy," the specter whispered. "Now!"

It was then Willy Martin took to his heels fleeing away from the Arena, away from his guilt, away from the awful creature he could not lose.

As the first blows began to fall Willy Martin screamed in agony, but relentlessly, mercilessly, they continued to fall.

Gradually he sank into a bruised, battered heap. It was all over by the time anyone came upon him. All he could utter through his twisted features was the name, "Mike Kelly," and he died.

Were it not for those two words, "Mike Kelly," that Willy whispered, the grave might not have been opened. But when Chuck Maloney discovered Mike's boxing gloves were missing from beneath his framed picture, although the police scoffed they decided to investigate.

When the grave was first approached, it was apparent it had not been disturbed. Grass grew evenly over the top, the headstone was in place. But shovels bit into the earth anyway as diggers probed the secret of Willy Martin's strange death. Finally the grave was open, and Mike Kelly's coffin was lifted out.

They forced back the lid and inside they found the year-old corpse of Mike Kelly, decayed and lifeless. He lay in the casket he'd gone to a year before. But inexplicably, tied on his dead hands were the polished, gilded boxing gloves that had hung by their knotted straps underneath his picture in Willy Martin's office. And strangest of all they were spotted now, with Willy Martin's blood....



YOU'VE BEEN VERY  
KIND TO SHOW ME  
YOUR PIPE, MADAM,  
BUT TOBACCO IS  
ALL I'LL BE  
NEEDING!

PERHAPS THEN, I  
CAN DO YOU A REAL  
SERVICE. SOMETHING  
YOU WILL THANK ME  
FOR TO YOUR  
DYING DAY!

**T**HE INSTANT I ENTERED THE TINY SMOKE TOBACCO SHOP, I WAS HELD BY A STARE AND UNEXPLAINABLE SENSE OF DANGER. WAS IT BECAUSE OF THE BURNING LOOK IN THE OLD WOMAN'S EYES, OR WAS IT THE CLOTHING BAGS OF DEER AND ANTS THAT BROUGHT REMIND TO MY HEART? HERE, IN THIS SHOP, THE FIRST LINK IN THE CHAIN OF TERROR HAD FORMED... TO TRANSPARENT AND WITH A WHOLE OF SUCH LOATHESOME HORROR, OF SUCH UNFORGETTABLE AND SINISTER FORCES, THAT DEATH ITSELF WOULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER FATE THAN ITS LIVING ANTHOLOGY!



YOU'VE BEEN DOING  
SOME MOUNTAIN  
CLIMBING, ENE  
THEN YOU MUST  
TRY THE PEAK  
NEAR MY NATIVE  
VILLAGE OF  
ZELLMOTT.  
YOU NEVER  
FORGET IT!

I APPRECI-  
ATE YOUR  
INTEREST,  
MADAM, BUT  
NOT THIS TIME.  
MY VACATION  
ENDS DAY  
AFTER TOMORROW.



**A**T THAT MOMENT, I HEARD A SLIGHT MOVEMENT FROM THE REAR OF THE SHOP AND...

MY DAUGHTER SELDA,  
YOUNG MAN PERHAPS  
YOU CAN CONVINCE  
YOU TO ACCEPT MY  
INVITATION?

BUT OF COURSE,  
YOU MUST FIRST  
ZELLMOTT!

"SHE SEEMED TO SMILE  
TOWARD ME, AND NOW I  
LOOKED INTO HER FACE. I  
COULD SEE THE DEEP  
DRAIN OF HER EYES BE-  
NEATH THE LONG STREAM OF  
HER LASHES AND BEAUTY  
WAS HYPOCRISY."

"TELLMOTT IS  
DIFFIDENT. YOU  
WILL FIND IT THE  
MOST EXCITING  
EXPERIENCE OF  
YOUR ENTIRE  
LIFE!"

"I-I DON'T  
KNOW MY  
PLANE  
CALLED FOR."



"THEN FORGET YOUR PLANE!  
TODAY YOU WILL PASS  
AN OLD TOWER AT A STEEP FALL.  
TELLMOTT LIES JUST BEYOND  
YOU WILL GO THERE!"

"I-- I'M  
NOT  
SURE"



"I'D WHAT SEEMED A WILD  
THOUGHT. I HADN'T BACKED  
OUT OF THE SHOP THE SINGLE  
MAINTAINING EYES HERE  
LEAVING MARKS BUT WHEN I  
WAS OUTSIDE."

"WHY, IT'S A  
PACKAGE OF  
TOBACCO-- SHE  
PUT IT IN MY HAND  
AND I HAVEN'T PAID  
FOR IT!"



"THE DOOR IS LOCKED!  
BUT... THAT SIGN! IT  
CAN'T BE!"



"BEMOORED AND SHOCKED, I LOOKED THROUGH THE  
WINDOW. I WAS AWARE OF AN IMMEDIATE CHANGE.  
THE DARK AND THE OLD WOMAN WERE GONE, AND SO  
WERE THE MOOD AND BAROQUE FURNISHINGS. THERE  
A DEVILING HORROR LOOMED BEFORE MY EYES!"

"THAT SHAKE!  
IT'S AWFUL!"



"I FLED IN TREMOR, THE LOATHSOME SPECTACLE  
PLUNGING MY THOUGHTS INTO ABYSSAL  
DEPTHS OF HORROR AND MOLD RANCO. YET THAT  
VERY SAME EVENING, AS MY TRAIN ROUNDED A  
LONG, BARREN TURN, I SAW IT..."

"IT'S THE TOWER, SLOW  
BROKE OFF-- AND THE  
MOUNTAIN! IT'S  
MAGNIFICENT!"



"PERHAPS IT HAS THE PECULIAR AURA OF THE  
TOWER THAT ONCE MADE ME THAT MADE  
ME AWARE OF SO STRANGE AND SUGGESTIVE  
MATTERS. I CAN OFFER NO EXPLANATION FOR  
MY ACTION, BUT A SHAKEN AND DISORIENTED  
MIND COMPELLED ME TO GET OFF THAT  
TRAIN..."



"WHETHER IT WAS AN APPROPRIATE OF THE  
DUAL-B POWER ITSELF, I DON'T  
KNOW-- MY LIFE CHANGED IN FOUR  
HOURS WITHOUT MY KNOWING HOW  
OR WHY. THEN I WAS IN THE  
MIDDLE, MY BODY SPLITTING  
HORRIBLY AGAINST THE COMING CHANGE."

THERE'S A LIGHT IN  
THAT INN. THIS PLACE  
IS ENOUGH TO GIVE  
A MAN THE  
CREEPS!



WELCOME, YOUNG  
MAN. WELCOME  
TO THE VILLAGE OF  
ZELLWOTT!

"MY MIND WAS SO CONFUSED BY THE  
STRANGE COLLAGE OF EVENTS, THAT I  
WANTED TO FLEE. BUT FLIGHT WAS IM-  
POSSIBLE WHEN I HEARD GILGAI'S VOICE. IT  
FELL UPON MY EARS LIKE THE THUNDER OF A  
DART SLIVER BELL, CHANGING AND OVER-  
POWERING IN ITS SINGINGNESS..."

YOU ARE NOT UNHAPPY TO FIND  
ME HERE, ARE YOU? WE WOULD  
LIKE TO MAKE YOU STAY HERE  
MORE COMFORTABLE. YOUR  
ROOM IS WAITING, HERE...?

MY NAME IS  
MICHAEL  
COWANS--  
AND I  
WILL  
STAY.



"DUMMLY, I FOLLOWED THE SWITCHING GILGAI  
FROM THE ROOM AS HE CAME TO THE  
STAIRWAY. I HEARD A SOUND AT MY FEET  
WHEN I LOOKED DOWN. A LOT OF HORROR  
SPEAKS TO MY LIFE, AND..."



LET ME GO, GILGAI!  
I CAN STILL  
KILL IT!

NO, YOU MUSTN'T!  
IT MEANT NO  
HARM!



"A MOMENT LATER, THE OLD CRONE EMERGED  
FROM THE ROOM WHICH THE SLAVE HAD  
ENTERED. HER FACE WAS TERRIFYING, BUT  
EVEN MORE SO WAS THE LIVED FELT AROUND  
HER CHEEK!"

"ZELLWOTT WE DO  
NOT HARM SLAVES,  
MR. COWANS--  
NEVER!"

HE MEANT NO  
HARM BY IT.  
LEAVE US  
ALONE!



WITH A FINAL SHARP GLANCE THE OLD CREW LEFT THEM AT THE DOOR OF HIS PIRATE. MY MOTHER'S STATE WAS PARTIALLY QUELLED BY GILDA'S MIGHTY SMILE AND GENTLE VOICE...

DO NOT BECOME ALARMED BY MY MOTHER'S ANGER. SHE DETESTS CRUELTY AGAINST ALL CREATURES-- EVEN ENEMIES!

BUT WAS IT A SHAME, GILDA?



OF COURSE, MICHAEL-- WHAT ELSE? COME NOW, AFTER A NIGHT'S REST YOU WILL HAVE FORGOTTEN IT. GOOD NIGHT, AND SLEEP WELL!

ALL RIGHT, GILDA. I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.



THE MORNING CAMP

WHAT SORT OF VILLAGE IS THIS, GILDA? I HAVE SEEN NO PEOPLE, AND LAST NIGHT...

NO QUESTIONS NOW, MICHAEL! GO TO THE MOUNTAIN. HEAR ITS PEAK. YOU WILL FIND A CAVERN. I WILL MEET YOU THERE LATER, AND EXPLAIN ALL.



COMING, AND WORDS WERE LIVE A COMMAND-- A COMMAND I FELT HOPED TO OBEY. ALL THAT MORNING I STROGGLED UP THE STEEP SLOPES, AND WITH EVERY STEP IT SEEMED AS THOUGH I COULD HEAR GILDA'S MIGHTY VOICE CALLING TO ME FROM ABOVE, URGING ME ON...



THE CAVERN AT LAST! SHE MUST BE INSIDE, WAITING FOR ME!

THE MOMENT I ENTERED, I WAS SHOOK BY A PARALYZING FEAR, AND THEN I SAW THE UPRIGHT, AWFUL MONSTER WHICH BORE THE SINGLE WORD FROM MY LIFE!

**GILDA!** WE HAVE AWAITED YOUR ARRIVAL, MICHAEL. NOW YOU SHALL LEARN THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS!



HALF CREEPY WITH TERROR, I TURNED TO FLEE!

YOU CAN'T ESCAPE, MICHAEL. COMING! WE CLAIM YOU AS ONE OF US!



A.R.C.H.



"WITH MY FINAL STRENGTH I BROKE FREE FROM THE PERILOUS JAM, AND REACHED THE CAVERN. I WALKED AWAY SLOWLY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN SIDE. HOURS LATER I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS."

"THAT SNAKE BIT ME! GOT TO FIND HELP—FAST!"

"MAYBE IT ISN'T TOO LATE. JUST A LITTLE MORE TO GO—GOT TO HOLD ON—GOT TO."

"SOMETHING ATTACKED ME ON THE MOUNTAIN—A SNAKE—CALL A DOCTOR!"

"NO DOCTOR CAN CURE YOU!"

"THIS IS NOT THE BITE FROM AN ORDINARY SNAKE. THE THING THAT ATTACKED YOU WAS FAR MORE LOATHSOME! AM I NOT RIGHT?"

"YES... IT WAS HORRIBLE!"

"YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF THE GREATEST EVIL EVER BROUGHT UPON MAN—THE ANCIENT SNAKE WORSHIPPERS OF BELMONT HAVE PLACED THEIR MARK UPON YOU!"

"SNAKE WORSHIPPERS?"

"THE OLD MAN BROUGHT BACK THE CORPSE ON A BED. I WAS HORRIFIED!"

"MY SON! BITTEN, AS YOU ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO!"

"TIME IS SHORT. MY SON IS FAR GONE. BUT IF YOU ARE TO SAVE YOURSELF THIS HORRIBLE RITE, WE MUST ACT QUICKLY TOGETHER WE MAY STILL DESTROY THIS EVIL— BUT WE MUST HURRY!"

"OF COURSE I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU SAY!"



"TAKING A SMALL PACKAGE FROM THE CABIN, THE OLD MAN LED THE WAY. LATER WHEN WE ENTERED A PASSAGE IN THE MOUNTAIN'S BELL, A FEELING OF HORROR BOLE WITHIN US."



"AT THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS, A GIGANTIC EIGHT-ARMED MONSTER VIEW."



"MICHAEL, COMING, BLOOD OF OUR BLOOD, STEP FORWARD! I GIVE YOU PRESENTS AMONGST US, AND THERE CAN BE NO ESCAPE. COME, MICHAEL, COME..."



"PERHAPS IT WAS THIS PERSON I FOLLOWED IN MY YOUTH WHICH MADE ME INCAPABLE OF RESISTING HER CALL. I WALKED TOWARD HER, DREAMING TO MEET HER. BECAUSE A WOMAN TO A FLEETING PLACE..."



"THEN THE OLD MAN WAS AT MY SIDE, TEARING AT HIS PACKAGE, AND A MOMENT LATER A SPUTTERING BUNDLE WAS HURLED AT THE BITTING, BURNING PLACE..."



"IN ONE DEAFENING BLAST THE CAVERN FLOOR SPLIT OPEN, AND A MOMENT LATER, FLEETING SCREAMS BROKE LOOSE AS THE SMOKY CREATURES TUMBLED FORWARD INTO A BOILING WELL OF SULPHURIC LIQUID!"



**I SAW BILDA, HER BODY A MARE OF SNAKE-LIKE SCALES, SUBMERGE INTO THE BUBBLING SURFAGE PIT!!**



**I SHAKED MY EYES AWAY FROM THE LAST AND FINAL MIRROR. I FOLLOWED THE OLD MAN DOWN THE HILLSIDEWAY AND OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN...**

**WE MUST HURRY! EVERY MOMENT WE LOSE, THEIR VENOM WEEPS FURTHER, WITH YOUR BLOOD! BUT THERE MAY STILL BE A WAY OF SAVING YOU, AS WELL AS MY SON!**



**UNKNOWN TO ME, THE OLD MAN HAD SCOOPED UP A GLASS OF THE BUBBLING LIQUID FROM THE SURFAGE PIT'S WELL...**

**SINCE THIS LIQUID WAS ABLE TO DESTROY THIS EVIL, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT A SMALL DOSEAGE WILL DESTROY THE VENOM WHICH STILL FLOWS IN YOUR VEINS. WE SHOULD KNOW IN A FEW DAYS! DRINK IT, MY SON!**



**"FINE EXPEDIMENT WAS SUCCESSFUL, AND AS I PROMISED TO LEAVE A WEEK LATER, BOTH THE SON AND I HAD FULLY RECOVERED. THEN, THE OLD MAN SPOKE OF THE VILLAGE..."**

**ACTUALLY, THE VILLAGE OF ZELLMOTT HAS BEEN DESERTED FOR TWO HUNDRED YEARS, EVER SINCE SOME OF ITS INHABITANTS HAD BEEN BURNED AT THE STAKE FOR WITCHCRAFT AND SNAKE WORSHIP!**



**"UPON RETURNING TO THE STAPES, I WAS DETERMINED TO GO BACK TO THE TOBACCO SHOP FOR A LAST LOOK. I DIDN'T REALLY EXPECT THE CHANCE TO BELIEVE MY STORY..."**

**IT'S FANTASTIC! YES, I KNOW. BESIDES, I WAS TO STARTLY CLOSED. YOU COULDNE SAW THE SIGN!**



**I SEE THAT SNAKE HAS CAUGHT YOUR EYE. MY SON FOUND IT THE OTHER DAY ON A HIKING TRIP NEAR THE DESERTED VILLAGE OF ZELLMOTT. IF YOU LIKE TO BUY IT...**



**"EXACTLY HOW, ALONG MY LAST HOUR, I THREW THE CURSED THING INTO THE FLAMES..."**



**NOW MY ONLY HOPE AND PRAYER, IS THAT I HAVE DESTROYED THE LAST OF THE SNAKE WORSHIP. DRUG, BUT WHAT IF THERE ARE STILL OTHERS WAITING FOR SOME INNOCENT CUSTOMER IN SOME OUT OF THE WAY SHOP? WHAT THEN?**



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2nd Choice . . . 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Payment enclosed (FASHION EXTRAS pays postage)

☐ Send C.O.D. (I'll pay postman plus charge)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZONE \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND NO MONEY  
Try 10 Days  
MAIL COUPON TODAY**

COLORED

Red - Blue - Black - Green - Orange  
Purple - Yellow - White - Brown - Pink